

RAFT REGION OF RED RIVER.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 199.]

APRIL 24, 1856.

Mr. EUSTIS, from the Committee on Commerce, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the "bill appropriating a sum of money for the completion of the improvements in the raft region of Red river," in Louisiana, have had the same under consideration, and report:

That they are unanimously of opinion that it should be adopted.

The navigation of Red river, having its course through Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas, and reaching far into the Indian country, is of great importance, not only to the citizens of those States, but to the government itself, whose troops on that frontier are supplied by its channel.

When, some twenty odd years ago, the government removed the old raft, of more than a hundred miles in length, it was believed no other work would be needed in the Red river; but the existence of that raft, from time immemorial, had, in blocking up the main channel, so diverted its waters through many small outlets into the swamps and lakes of the valley, that when freed from the rafted timber, it had not, in many places, sufficient capacity left to pass the new supplies that were annually brought down from its thousand miles of caving banks.

This timber, having lodged in the first narrow river it encountered, has been accumulating for some fifteen years, and now forms a compact body of logs of as many miles in length; and the stream in that part of the river, accommodating itself to the lessened supply of water, has lost all capacity to float through other timber should the present raft be cut up and removed; hence the plan of operations now being pursued by Colonel Fuller, United States agent and engineer in charge of the work going on to carry the river *around* the raft, and to enable him to accomplish which, the sum of \$60,000, mentioned in the bill, has been called for in his report of 1st September last. (See appendix, Doc. No. 13, page 323; part 2d, President's message.)

So destructive have been the floods of water annually poured over

the banks of this stream above, and in consequence of the raft, that lands which were sold by the government twenty years ago at extravagant prices, when it was believed a good open river would always be maintained, have been long since abandoned, and there is not now an acre of land in cultivation on either bank of the stream for fifty miles above the raft.

For these, and many other reasons not necessary to be mentioned in this report, the committee are of opinion that the bill should pass without opposition.